

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

For the

State of Delaware, Division for the Visually Impaired

MEETING MINUTES

November 14, 2016

9:30am - 1:00pm

Location: Smyrna Rest Stop

5500 DuPont Pkwy. Smyrna, DE 19977

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. McAllister vice Chair of the VRAC called the meeting to order at 9:36 am (on behalf of Mr. Garner).

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. McAllister requested a roll call for the purpose of the minutes. Darryl Garner, Chair attended via teleconference. In attendance were Kevin McAllister (Vice Chair), Suzanne Howell (Member), Blake Roberts (Member), Deb Bradl (Member/DVI), Elisha Jenkins (DVI Director), Dava Newnam (Deputy Director DVI), Shirley Bryson (Member/DVI), Genelle Fletcher (Member/DVI) Christy Bazemore (DVI), Kerriann Pringle (DVI), Sonya Lawrence (Member), Amber Mangini (Admin/DVI)

III. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS VRAC MEETING

Mr. McAllister stated that the minutes would have to again be bypassed due to lack of quorum and opted to approve those, as well as Sept & Oct minutes at the next meeting.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

- A. *White Cane Day*— Mr. McAllister was happy to report an outstanding turn out from the consumers as well as the vendors. He also stated that although the event turned out great, there was a competing event within the disabilities community happening at the same location at the same time. He

recommended that for future events, we keep open communication within the Disabilities community regarding events because we don't want to split our stake holders, our legislators, or our community. Mr. McAllister also wanted to recognize Melodye May and Alice Johnson for their hard work preparing the event and making it such a success. He suggested getting media coverage for future events to not only showcase all of the work that the VRAC is doing but to also inform people about DVI and the VRAC. Ms. Howell suggested that the VRAC get a special sign and tablecloth made to inform people of the VRAC's presence at future events. Mr. Garner suggested that when advertising for an event we reach out to the general public rather than only people with visual impairments or disabilities. Ms. Jenkins stated that the Technology fair was distributed department wide to all agencies through DHSS, as well as constant contact by Debbie Talley who reached out to ophthalmologists, vendors, and over 1,000 people who are on her list. Mr. McAllister stated that the council is open to ways on how to open our events up to the public more.

V. NEW / SPECIAL BUSINESS

- A. *Elections for VRAC officers*— Mr. McAllister asked the council to email their recommendations for the officer positions prior to the next meeting. The two open positions are for the Chair and the Vice Chair.

- B. *Letter to the Governor*— On November 7th a few executive members from the councils met at DVI to prepare a letter to our current Governor and current Legislator. The different councils wanted to send a unified and solidified message to our legislators and Governor. The goal was to draft two separate letters, one to the Governor and one to the Legislators. They plan to send the letters once they are signed by all of the Chair's (or Chair's designee). At this point we are waiting for all of the council's feedback on the letters. None of the members had questions.

VI. DVI

- A. *DVI-VR Administrator Report* – Ms. Bryson reported 30 successful closures (employed for over 90 days) for FY16. As of 10/28/16 the current caseload is 210; a review of the caseload reflected that 19 individuals are ready to work, 11 have been employed for less than 90 days, and 62 are in training or a higher education program. There are 68 transition-aged students aged 14-21 and 85 transition-aged 14-24. Ms. Bryson introduced 2 new VR staff members, Christy Bazemore (Senior VR counselor for NCC and northern Kent) and Kerriann Pringle (Transition Counselor). Ms. Bryson also reported that VR had 4 students participate in Disability Mentoring Day.

Mr. McAllister inquired as to why the number of individuals on the case load has decreased. Ms. Bryson explained that the decrease in numbers is due to the successful closures of cases.

Ms. Lawrence requested more information such as a quarterly breakdown of the closures to include the number of unsuccessful closures, number of successful, and if not closed successfully then why? Ms. Jenkins stated that the information being requested is not only available but the goal of collecting it monthly is attainable. Ms. Bradl agreed to aide in providing the requested data.

- B. *DVI Director Report*– Ms. Jenkins reported (from federal FY) that from FY15-FY16 DVI overall had a 4% decrease in the amount of consumers that they served. DVI however, hired an intake coordinator who has taken 27 referrals in the prior month, so things will be looking up. On November 1st Ms. Jenkins and Ms. Newnam participated in the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act's Strategic Planning Event to plan on how DE is going to implement the performance measures and indicators that are required. She stated that more of these meetings will be

scheduled to ensure participation and understanding from all departments. She also talked about Microsoft's new platform "Vision 20/20" and the goal to preserve the value of the VR program. Ms. Jenkins also announced that DVI hired a new assistive technology person (to replace Jack McClutchen) named Ricky Brown.

There has been no progress made with the open principal position.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Howell shared her voting experience using "Adam" with the council. She talked about the modern technology that allows blind individuals to vote. A discussion ensued about voting for the blind and visually impaired.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McAllister adjourned the meeting at 11:13am

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Mangini